

AIR FORCE FELLOWS

AIR UNIVERSITY

OVERCOMING INERTIA: BUILDING HUMAN CAPITAL FOR INTERAGENCY SUCCESS

by

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Contents

DISCLAIMER	2
PREFACE	4
ABSTRACT.....	5
INTRODUCTION	6
SETTING THE STAGE	9
THE HUMAN CAPITAL PROBLEM.....	13
INITIATIVES ALREADY UNDERWAY.....	21
POSSIBLE MODELS FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING	30
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	39
BIBLIOGRAPHY	43

Preface

In 2003, while attending Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell AFB, I worked with a group researching topics of interest for the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. My small piece of that project resulted in an unpublished paper entitled “The Air Component and the Interagency.” Until writing that paper, I had been unfamiliar with the term ‘interagency’, and in retrospect, my lack of knowledge on the topic was probably average among my military peer group. During my studies, I learned two important lessons. First, as a mid-level government employee, I should have been much more aware of the way my department interacted with other agencies. Second, bridging my knowledge gap did not require significant re-training; all I needed was some study time away from my daily, military routine.

Now, six years later, I have returned to the interagency topic. My newest research indicates that more people are talking and writing about the subject than ever before, but many of the familiar problems still exist. Notably, we need more mid-level professionals who can work effectively with their peers in other government agencies.

I wish to thank the Institute for Defense Analyses for providing me an ideal research environment during my National Defense Fellowship, and all the people inside and outside of the Department of Defense who shared their thoughts with me. I am especially indebted to those who teach the Reconstruction and Stabilization courses at the Foreign Service Institute. In my opinion, their efforts are exactly on track for training people to succeed in interagency efforts.

Abstract

Numerous studies have concluded that the United States Government needs more people who are competent at working across traditional agency boundaries. However, not everyone has agreed upon the best method for developing this necessary ‘human capital.’ In order to supply such a method, this paper analyzes past work, investigates ongoing efforts, and develops various models to boost the number of interagency specialists. The conclusion is that the government should adopt a phased approach to its problem. In the short-term phase, the government needs to build upon current human capital initiatives that show promise, protecting these efforts from endless attempts to refine them. Current programs could be broadened without dulling their effectiveness, enabling the government to generate human capital until its second phase matures. This second, longer-term phase should be the development of a truly independent corps of interagency experts, essentially a new bureaucratic structure within the government, in accordance with the recent recommendations of the Project on National Security Reform. The combination of these two phases should alleviate much of the friction plaguing the government, leading to greater interagency effectiveness, both abroad and at home.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The United States Government continues to struggle with integrating its abundant capabilities because of competing departmental cultures, mandates, and operating styles. One root of the multi-faceted interagency problem is the prototypical government employee, a person incubated in a single agency, steeped in a narrow ‘world view’, specialized in particular tasks, and insulated from the rest of the government. When faced with a roster of insular team members, government leaders with short timelines have resorted to ad hoc interagency solutions with predictably poor results.¹ Furthermore, under-resourced departments have been forced to call upon other organizations to cover their responsibilities.² To make things worse, the pool of individuals accustomed to working across departmental boundaries is frustratingly shallow.

Over the last several years, the United States Government (USG) has taken some tentative steps toward deepening this ‘human capital’ pool. From building interagency coordination groups, to laying the groundwork for a deployable Civilian Response Corps (CRC), the government is moving slowly toward greater interagency capacity. However, much remains to be done. To begin, the government needs to solidify gains by nurturing human capital initiatives already underway, and by encouraging new advances in the field. Furthermore, in order to guide new advances, the USG must commit to a human capital strategy and see it through to completion. Thus, the goal of this paper is to propose such a strategy, and present a

composite model the government might use to develop its human capital in the short term, while simultaneously building a professional interagency workforce in the long term.

In order to achieve its goal, the paper begins with a brief survey of the literature on the human capital problem, chronicling a number of policy resolutions and studies over the past twelve years. The reader will find a common theme throughout this period: namely, plenty of words, but too little action. As the survey will show, personnel problems are exceedingly complicated, involving many different agencies and individuals. This complexity has led to governmental inertia and a decided lack of ‘follow-through’ on the resolutions and studies.

The complexity issue is central to this paper, and forms the basis of the next chapter. Multiple questions drive the complex human capital problem. Fundamentally, how will the USG develop interagency experts, and what incentives might lure people into such a career?³ Does the term ‘interagency expert’ imply an exclusive, new career field, or will experts continue to work in their previous professions? In addition to finding suitable candidates, decision-makers must figure out what the new human capital system should look like. Will it be centrally controlled, similar to a government department, or instead resemble a network of loosely affiliated groups? These are obviously difficult questions that must be addressed in any comprehensive human capital strategy.

In the context of this complex problem, numerous on-going interagency achievements are worthy of note, and the ensuing chapter will consider a few of these. For example, the USG has taken effective steps to improve its Reconstruction and Stabilization (R&S) operations, interagency efforts that have proven extremely problematic in the past.⁴ In addition, the government has fostered better interagency coordination at the Regional Combatant

Commanders' headquarters, and has sponsored an initiative in Washington to develop a cadre of national security professionals who can move easily among government agencies.

After outlining some of the current-day efforts to build human capital, the paper will propose several models for the USG to consider. In particular, the study will examine four ways of producing and organizing interagency professionals, presenting each plan with its own strengths and weaknesses. These candidate models will lead into the paper's final chapter, which suggests a strategy for building an interagency workforce, and proposes a *composite* model to implement that strategy.

Notes

(All notes in this paper appear in shortened form. For full details, see the appropriate entry in the bibliography.)

¹ *A Smarter, More Secure America*, 9; also Hamblet and Kline, "Interagency Cooperation", 92.

² *A Foreign Affairs Budget for the Future*, 1; also *Preliminary Findings*, 80.

³ For a good summary of the incentive problem, see Murdock et al., *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols*, 58.

⁴ Hamblet and Kline, "Interagency Cooperation", 93.

Chapter 2

Setting the Stage

As mentioned in the introduction, many have written about fixing the human capital problem, but few have taken action. This chapter will concentrate strictly on literature pertaining to human capital development, particularly official governmental publications. It will not address the significant body of literature devoted to improving interagency *cooperation*. Although the two topics are closely related, the latter discussion is too broad for the scope of this paper. Furthermore, this chapter will focus on events from the last twelve years, even though efforts to produce interagency professionals date back to the 1940's.¹

Twelve years ago, two notable events pushed human capital development into the spotlight. First, the Clinton administration issued Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56, an effort to improve interagency training for individuals involved in complex contingency operations. PDD-56 sought to hone interagency performance by using the 'materials' at hand, rather than creating a new type of government employee. Although the directive apparently propelled progress initially, by 2000 its momentum was already slowing. In that year, a particularly prescient article in *Joint Forces Quarterly* pondered the future of PDD-56: "Perhaps Congress will establish a continuing requirement which calls on every agency of government to adopt the reforms that are contained in this directive. One can only trust that progress made to date will not be swept away."² In the nine years since this article was written, Congress has taken no such steps.

Second, a government panel assessing the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) process proposed the idea of “an interagency cadre of professionals” to boost USG performance in national security affairs.³ Through a robust, long-term career development program, these individuals would fill specific jobs within the national security framework. The panel invoked the 1986 *Goldwater-Nichols* legislation, which promoted ‘Jointness’ within DoD, as a model for growing such interagency professionals. Although the panel’s recommendations did not lead to any concrete initiatives, they did inspire several follow-on propositions that continue to the present day.

The first significant follow-on came from the 2001 Hart-Rudman Commission (HRC) on national security. HRC proposed developing a National Security Service Corps (NSSC), again a cadre of individuals who would specialize in national security efforts. Their proposition included considerable detail on training and education, an assignment process, and promotion concerns. It also introduced the concept of a personnel ‘float’, a buffer in the government’s manpower rosters that would allow agencies to remain fully staffed while sending a percentage of their people through education and training programs.⁴ The next follow-on came from the substantial *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols* (BG-N) study in 2004-2006, which furthered the discussion of building a corps of interagency professionals. Although neither HRC nor BG-N resulted in any tangible human capital programs, both laid the foundation for two important, recent works on the issue: the National Security Professional Development (NSPD) program and the Project for National Security Reform (PNSR).

Initiated in 2007 by an executive order, the on-going NSPD program included ideas from previous studies, and added an important new element. Notably, it sought to develop national security professionals who could lead interagency efforts in both national and *domestic* security

scenarios. This inclusion of the domestic angle acknowledged the widespread discontent with homeland interagency efforts, such as the response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005.⁵ Even though NSPD literature admitted the need for a broad-based interagency culture, the program currently targets only seasoned professionals (GS-13 and above). The NSPD initiative will be covered in further detail later, as it does represent a concrete program to improve human capital across the USG. In short, NSPD is more than just a study, which makes it unusual.

The most recent effort to address human capital was the work by PNSR.⁶ This enormous undertaking, released in November 2008, contained bold measures to revamp the entire national security apparatus. The study went far beyond the human capital problem, although that topic did occupy a prominent place within the 800-page volume. Specifically, PNSR conducted a comprehensive review of the difficulties in producing human capital for interagency work, and offered a number of recommendations for improvement, including some ideas borrowed from previous studies.

Two PNSR ideas in particular are important to this paper's discussion. First, the study suggested creating a national security professional corps (NSPC) that is truly *independent* from the parent departments. The idea of a centralized, independent structure differs from the current NSPD undertaking. While NSPD also strives to create national security professionals, its program is decentralized, relying upon the departments as the "primary engines of the effort."⁷ According to PNSR, an independent corps offers a distinct advantage, because "it would eliminate... [governmental] reluctance to give up personnel for interagency positions."⁸ PNSR's second important concept was that "NSPC status should be tied to individuals and not based on the position they hold."⁹ This concept would enable NSPC officers to move in and out of the

new interagency structure while maintaining a special ‘watermark’ throughout their careers. Such mobility might provide an incentive for people to commit to an interagency career.

After reviewing government studies and efforts up to this point, it should be apparent that the USG lacks an *enduring* strategy for developing human capital; it keeps updating the blueprint, but never gets around to actually building anything (with the recent exception of the NSPD). As suggested in the introductory chapter, this lack of follow-through is probably due to inertia in the face of a complex problem. The next chapter will examine this complex problem in detail.

Notes

¹ A Congressional Research Service (CRS) study undertook a thorough literature survey in July 2008 (see Dale, *Building an Interagency Cadre* in the bibliography). The work traced USG efforts in detail, culminating in a discussion of the National Security Professional Development (NSPD) program. Unless otherwise noted, material in chapter two derives from this CRS study.

² Hamblet and Kline, 97.

³ Dale, *Building an Interagency Cadre*, 4.

⁴ *Road Map for National Security*, 65.

⁵ Carafano, “Managing Mayhem”, 136.

⁶ A draft study by the National Defense University actually came out a month after the PNSR report (see Binnendijk and Cronin, “Civilian Surge: Key to Complex Operation” in bibliography). This significant NDU study focused on increasing federal civilian capacity to address human capital shortfalls.

⁷ Dale, *Building an Interagency Cadre*, 12.

⁸ *Forging a New Shield*, 468.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 468.

Chapter 3

The Human Capital Problem

A useful way to approach the complex problem is to propose a definition of the ‘ideal interagency expert.’¹ This perfect employee starts his or her career on a well-defined track specifically designed to develop people for interagency service. After spending 5-10 years maturing as a departmental specialist, the employee enters the interagency workforce. While maintaining credibility in original departmental functions, he or she transforms into a generalist, becoming proficient and *comfortable* working outside of customary lanes with people from other agencies. This interagency expert is fully familiar with jargon from multiple branches of government, understands and appreciates the agendas of other USG employees, and maintains focus on interagency goals above all else. He or she is motivated to excel by the promise of promotion within the interagency workforce, is supported by a well-defined ‘chain of command’, and actively works to improve interagency cooperation.

To develop any sort of interagency workforce, whether in accordance with the proposed ‘ideal’ or some other model, the USG must address three overarching topics: timeline, structure, and people. Specifically, the government needs to weigh the time investment required by the undertaking, and whether that investment will address immediate needs. Furthermore, the USG must decide how it will structure its human capital system, since organization will be crucial in attracting, supporting, and retaining the best employees for interagency work. Finally, the

government must ponder who it wishes to recruit, and weigh the incentives which might attract those people to an interagency career.

Now, consider the three overarching topics as they apply to developing a workforce of ‘ideal’ experts. The timeline required for such a project is certainly daunting. Nevertheless, setting some sort of long-term goal is exactly what USG leadership should do. While upholding the ideal employee as a distant aim, the government can take positive steps in the short-term. First of all, there is no need for everyone to enter an interagency career. In fact, the interagency workforce ultimately should comprise just a fraction of the overall USG payroll, thereby simplifying the human capital problem. In truth, the government still needs its maligned stovepipes, those vertically-defined departments that protect the specializations so crucial to national power.² Just imagine the State Department run by part-time diplomats, or the Defense Department run by reservists on rotating two-week activations. Second of all, a growing number of government employees actually do have interagency experience already. From the emergency response to Hurricane Katrina to whole-of-government efforts in rebuilding Iraq, professionals from many departments continue to work side by side. Although the collaborative results have not always been stellar, the good news is that people are learning. Even better, short-term interagency training appears to be on the rise, codifying lessons learned and helping the USG maintain the momentum of its short-term gains.³

One major roadblock to interagency momentum has been the problem of developing an organizational structure for the workforce. The government must determine the best way to organize its experts. For instance, the ‘ideal’ model suggests a permanent bureaucracy with all the requisite supporting mechanisms: career hierarchy, pay scales, infrastructure, and above all, culture. In a sense, the model imagines the interagency workforce as a centralized, ‘horizontal

stovepipe’ that cuts across existing departments. Since this bureaucratic structure does not exist today, the government would have to build it from the ground up, presumably at considerable expense. Another possibility is an interagency workforce that ‘overlies’ the existing bureaucracy. In this case, the current departments and agencies would supply all supporting mechanisms for the workforce, leading to a highly decentralized structure. Although possibly less expensive, this second structure presents its own problems, since organizations would need to integrate both interagency generalists and stovepipe specialists under the same roof. In between these two structures lie a variety of possibilities. Finally, it is important to remember that any proposed workforce structure might need to dovetail with a much larger re-structuring of the national security apparatus, as proposed by PNSR. Their broader recommendations focus on aspects ranging from the National Security Council to congressional oversight committees. The PNSR model is centrally directed, which might make any sort of decentralized workforce problematic.

Having described the topics of timeline and structure, this chapter finishes by considering the people angle. Two aspects of this topic require discussion: first, an investigation of the candidate pool itself, and second, a consideration of possible incentives for people to embark upon interagency careers. The candidate pool includes four types of professionals: government civilians, individuals from the private sector, government contractors, and military personnel. Many government civilians already understand the *concept* of interagency work, and in some cases, may have experience working across departmental boundaries. They are the people closest to the problem, and might be the best ones to help the government move toward a solution. Unfortunately, these people already belong to departments, so their departure to interagency jobs leaves government agencies with a manning problem. Private individuals, on

the other hand, may be unfamiliar with the bureaucracy, but they bring fresh perspectives and unique capabilities. Their involvement in interagency work does not affect departmental manning, but does equate to an expansion of the overall USG payroll, which could lead to fiscal and political tensions.

Increasingly, the USG has adopted the strategy of hiring contractors as a hedge against payroll enlargement. Employing contractors as part of an interagency workforce has some obvious benefits, but also possible drawbacks. As with civilian-sector newcomers, contractors allow interagency capacity to grow without stripping the departments of their manpower. Also, if managed correctly, contractors might help preserve the corporate knowledge that tends to be lost when government employees fulfill their interagency tasks and move back quickly into their respective stovepipes.⁴ As an example of capitalizing on contractors' corporate knowledge, S/CRS employs these professionals to teach courses in their interagency schoolhouse.⁵

On the negative side, contractors can disappear from the interagency workforce just as quickly as their government counterparts. As contracts turn over, current contract employees might not sign on with the new company. If they leave, they take their valuable experience with them. Furthermore, contractors typically do not lead government projects, and leadership is certainly a key aspect of any interagency effort. Because of this, contractors will find some limits on what they can accomplish.⁶

Finally, the military can produce interagency workers simply by channeling careers in new directions. DoD has done something similar in the last two decades. Upon passage of the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols legislation, DoD induced its military members to undertake 'joint' tours in order to be considered for promotion to general and flag officer rank.⁷ The military could take a similar approach toward building interagency capacity by adding an interagency tour to every

officer's to-do list. However, there are a couple of problems with this approach. First, a military member would contribute to the interagency workforce for only a finite period of time, at which point he or she would return to a regular military career. Second, a mandatory interagency tour, when summed with the requisite joint tour, takes each individual out of his or her specialty for a significant period of time (as much as six years, following the Goldwater-Nichols model). This time spent away from core specialties erodes the department's overall capability, which is particularly undesirable in the Department of Defense.

The preceding problems have plausible counter-arguments. For instance, the military could shorten a mandatory interagency tour to make it less intrusive. However, such a move would simply create a cadre of amateurs waiting to get back to their military stovepipes, not at all the desired goal. Also, some have argued that an interagency tour could take the place of a joint tour.⁸ Instead of mandating joint expertise among all of its officers, the military could develop a small cadre of officers with interagency expertise. In fact, DoD already does this through the Foreign Area Officer program, growing military specialists who work interagency-type programs overseas.

Since interagency efforts can also be domestic in nature, DoD might consider a parallel program that trains some officers to work in the domestic interagency arena. The National Guard Bureau might best orchestrate such an effort. In both cases, foreign and domestic, the military enjoys an enormous manpower advantage over the civilian departments. Although stretched thin after years of personnel cuts, DoD is still better positioned than most to support whole-of-government enterprises.⁹ Furthermore, military participation in the interagency workforce is crucial because much of the friction in past efforts has occurred between DoD and

other agencies.¹⁰ Having military members who work and deploy with civilian counterparts will be crucial as the USG builds its interagency capacity.

After identifying groups who might be suited for an interagency career, the government needs to consider how to attract those individuals. People will weigh their current occupations against the incentives of a relatively new, even experimental, ‘career field’. To illustrate the incentive concept, consider the S/CRS experience in standing up the Civilian Response Corps. The government has just begun populating the ‘active component’ (CRC-A), a cadre of on-call specialists who can respond within 48 hours to R&S requirements.¹¹ Membership in the CRC-A is open to both current government employees and people from the civilian sector, and requires members to take a two-year hiatus from their current jobs. Current evidence from the State Department suggests that filling the new CRC-A positions may not be difficult. According to the Chief of the CRC Operations Division, there have been numerous volunteers from within State Department ranks. He speculates that DoS volunteers are raising their hands because they see a CRC tour as a stepping stone to advancement in their department.¹² Thus, the incentive of future departmental rewards may be a primary motivation for those already in government.

Like DoS, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) is responsible for filling a portion of the new CRC-A positions. USAID has also noticed an interest in these jobs, this time from people in the private sector. The incentive issue here is more complicated. It appears that people are responding to a short-term job opportunity, even though they realize there may not be a long-term job for them once their tour is complete.¹³ The incentive for these newcomers to join might be personal, involving a positive feeling of accomplishment, or it may be professional, meaning a chance to add a particular experience to their resumes. Incidentally, long-term CRC jobs are uncertain because future funding of the CRC is still in question. As a

general comment, uncertainty about the future of the CRC, or any interagency initiative, might prove to be a *disincentive* for people to join. Should the government truly commit to interagency initiatives, for instance by passing legislation, then candidates might also be more likely to commit.

Not surprisingly, interagency recruitment must also address *departmental* incentives when current government employees are being considered. Again referring to the CRC-A situation, departments have agreed to release their employees with the understanding that S/CRS will pay their salaries during their interagency tours. This financial arrangement amounts to backfill funding, since the departments would be able to hire temporary replacements until their employees return. Furthermore, recruited people will occupy office space in the parent departments, even though they work directly for S/CRS during their tours. This arrangement leads to the ‘overlay’ concept discussed under structure, and will result in additional costs for the departments. In a nod toward incentivizing the departments, S/CRS will also pay for these overhead costs.¹⁴

Notes

¹ The term ‘interagency expert’ may be found in various works: for example, see Shepard, “Developing Military Interagency Experts” and Murdock et al., *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols*, 59).

² *Forging a New Shield*, 582

³ State Department (Foreign Service Institute) course materials and classroom discussion, courses PD560-562 on Reconstruction and Stabilization

⁴ *Forging a New Shield*, 309-310.

⁵ State Department course materials and classroom discussion

⁶ See Binnendijk and Cronin, “Civilian Surge,” chapter 7 for a full discussion of using contractors in interagency efforts.

⁷ Murdock et al., *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols*, 53.

⁸ Smith, “Developing USAF Officers”, 18.

⁹ *A Foreign Affairs Budget*, 1; *Preliminary Findings*, 80.

¹⁰ Smith, “Developing USAF Officers”, 1.

¹¹ Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization website.

¹² Discussion with the Chief of the Operations Division, Civilian Response Corps.

Notes

¹³ Discussion with the Response Corps Coordinator, US Agency for International Development.

¹⁴ Discussion with the Chief of the Operations Division, Civilian Response Corps.

Chapter 4

Initiatives Already Underway

Having discussed what the USG *could* do to build an interagency workforce, this paper moves now into a discussion of some ongoing initiatives in building and employing human capital. Out of the numerous ongoing efforts, four particular topics stand out in this investigation: the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stability (S/CRS), interagency ‘teams’ such as Joint Interagency Coordination Groups (JIACGs) and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), Defense Department Foreign Area Officers (FAOs), and the National Security Professional Development (NSPD) program. The first three topics focus on specific, or functional, interagency concerns, while the final one takes a broader approach to interagency workforce capacity.

Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization

The S/CRS initiative within DoS is a functional interagency approach to the R&S problem. National Security Presidential Directive 44 (NSPD-44) called upon the State Department “to lead, coordinate and institutionalize U.S. Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife, so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy and a market economy.”¹ DoS created S/CRS to meet these requirements. New to the government structure,

S/CRS operates through supplemental funding without a permanent status within the national budget. Its funding challenges have been an impediment to fulfilling its NSPD-44 mandate.² Three developments within S/CRS are of interest: the Civilian Response Corps, the Interagency Management System (IMS), and interagency training.

When complete, the CRC will comprise three branches: active, standby, and reserve. The active branch, currently under recruitment, will seek to employ about 250 personnel on a full-time basis. The standby component, composed entirely of current government employees with R&S skills, will eventually number 2,000 individuals.³ These people have volunteered to respond within 30 days of a call-up, with the concurrence of their respective departments. Note that standby members maintain their current departmental jobs while not deployed, contrasted with active members who administratively separate from their jobs to join the CRC. Finally, the CRC will have a reserve component composed of US citizens with “sector-specific civilian response expertise” who can deploy within 45-60 days. This reserve component, also planned to number 2,000 people, is not yet funded.⁴ Thus, the CRC program provides an estimate of the manpower that some experts think will be necessary for R&S operations.⁵ Once fully operational, the Corps could provide 4,000-5,000 people for such interagency efforts. It is important to note that R&S represents only one aspect of interagency demand.

Another S/CRS development, the Interagency Management System, is a planning and implementation framework to be used in complex, national security crises. Its name is somewhat misleading, in that it does not ‘manage’ the interagency. Rather, the IMS leads R&S operations across multiple departments, coordinating at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The strategic level, based in Washington DC, provides policy-level guidance for the rest of the system. The operational level deploys interagency planning teams, known as Integration

Planning Cells (IPCs), to the military's Joint Force Commanders (JFCs). This type of interagency planning is truly innovative for two reasons. First, deliberate planning has traditionally belonged only to DoD. Second, operational-level teams have not previously existed among the civilian departments.⁶ Therefore, the IPC concept demonstrates a real effort to align military and civilian processes and structures. Finally, the tactical-level Advance Civilian Teams (ACTs) deploy to support the US Country Team in the crisis location, or create a Country Team from scratch if necessary.

The IMS itself is not a solution to the human capital problem; instead, it provides insight into how the government might *employ* its interagency workforce. Specifically, it demonstrates that interagency operations require people from all 'rank' strata to be familiar with, and comfortable in, an interagency setting. To use a military analogy, the strategic level of the IMS would be comprised of flag officers, the IPCs would consist of field grade staff officers, and the ACTs would be filled by company grade officers and below. This analogy shows that the interagency workforce must not be composed solely of 'leaders', but must include planners and workers as well.

Finally, S/CRS provides a nascent interagency training capability that could serve as a model for broader interagency workforce development. Run through the Foreign Service Institute, the training program offers courses aimed at preparing government employees to serve in the CRC and/or work within the IMS. The courses are relatively brief and appear helpful in turning a departmental employee into an interagency worker fairly quickly.⁷ Of course, interagency training provides only part of the answer. As some commentators have observed, another necessary ingredient, interagency *experience*, must be acquired elsewhere.⁸

Joint Interagency Coordination Groups and Provincial Reconstruction Teams

The JIACGs and PRTs are two more initiatives that address functional interagency problems. Like the IMS, both initiatives are efforts to *employ* interagency manpower, rather than to build a multipurpose interagency workforce. PRTs are interagency organizations designed to assist provincial governments improve rule of law, economic and political reconstruction, and delivery of public services in regions in crisis. Currently supporting coalition operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq, PRTs started in the early stages of the Afghanistan conflict as an initiative by the US military.⁹ In 2005, the State Department formalized the concept when it stood up PRTs in each of Iraq's 18 provinces; these PRTs evolved from pre-existing reconstruction groups.¹⁰ One of the real problems in the genesis of the Iraqi PRTs was the USG's difficulty in finding enough civilian team members, partly because of the fragile security situation, but also because of a lack of people available and qualified for interagency work.¹¹ Those who filled the positions left behind open desks in their home offices, exactly the sort of shortfalls that departments dread.

PRTs in the two countries serve the same functional purpose (R&S), but their compositions differ. Afghanistan PRTs are primarily military organizations with only small numbers of civilian experts. This military primacy, both in manning and in guidance (PRTs in Afghanistan are directed by the International Security Assistance Force—ISAF), is due to the fundamental lack of security in the regions where the PRTs operate.¹² In contrast, the PRTs in Iraq are largely civilian-run and take their guidance from the US Embassy National Coordination Team.¹³ The success of the PRT model, a genuine interagency undertaking, makes it quite plausible that the United States and its partners will employ these teams in future conflicts.

Furthermore, since the average team might employ up to 100 people, the PRT concept represents a continuing demand for a dedicated interagency workforce, both military and civilian.¹⁴

The JIACG, an interagency concept conceived by the military, has provided military commanders with interagency planning and execution guidance since the prototype developed in 2003. With a broader interagency mandate than the PRTs, the ideal JIACG employs personnel with significant interagency experience, and is typically led by an SES-level individual.¹⁵ Since a JIACG resides in each Combatant Command headquarters, it consequently deals with operational-level issues. At first glance, that means the JIACG serves a role similar to that of the IPC discussed earlier in this chapter. However, according to S/CRS, the IMS does not intend to absorb the JIACGs, since JIACGs represents full-time interagency presence for the commanders, while the IPCs exist only during crises.¹⁶

Unfortunately, the full-time nature of the ideal JIACG may no longer reflect reality. External funding for the JIACGs expires this year, which means the Combatant Commands will have to compensate the other government agencies directly for their borrowed employees. Some of the team positions are already empty because of the impending funding problem. For instance, the USPACOM JIACG currently operates without a State Department FSO, and the Treasury Department most likely will not replace their individual departing from that team. What does this mean for the future of the JIACG concept? Like other interagency initiatives before it, the JIACG might be disappearing before its time. On the other hand, the JIACG may have fulfilled its purpose as an interagency stimulus, and now the Combatant Commands will move in new directions to accomplish their interagency coordination. According to one commentator conversant on the topic, it is not the JIACG structure that is important, but rather the interagency capability it was intended to foster.¹⁷

Foreign Area Officers

The FAO program represents a DoD effort to transform officers into people adept at working outside of traditional military channels. Among other things, their skills include cooperating closely with other government agencies. It is important to note that these officers do not become *universal* interagency experts; for instance, one will not find them working domestic issues. FAO training provides particular foreign language skills and cultural awareness, and while the officers do not receive in-depth interagency training, they gain interagency expertise through the course of their work.¹⁸ Although the Defense Department may not be the only agency to have undertaken such a program, it was certainly one of the first. The FAO program, originally an Army effort, originated 60 years ago.¹⁹ Recent emphasis by DoD in 2005 has reinvigorated the FAO program, particularly by accelerating the Air Force and Navy efforts to bolster the capacity traditionally provided by the Army and Marines.²⁰

The four services take two different approaches to FAO development. The Army and Navy commit their officers to full-time careers as FAOs after recruiting them in the 7-9 year range of military service, a development method referred to as ‘single track’. In contrast, the Air Force and Marines develop FAOs who maintain two separate career paths, known as the ‘dual track’ system.²¹ For illustration, an Air Force FAO, known within the service as a Regional Affairs Strategist (RAS), might also be a pilot. Such an officer would serve his military career alternating between flying assignments and FAO assignments. In addition to the RAS officers, the Air Force and Marines are developing a separate corps of Political-Military Affairs Strategists (PAS). PAS officers (who are not FAOs) serve only one tour in the pol-mil field before returning permanently to their original career paths. PAS officers fill many positions

which require pol-mil expertise, but do not require the level of specialization and corporate experience brought by a RAS officer. Since it takes a significant, permanent investment for the service to create a RAS, it makes sense to augment interagency capacity with the PAS corps.²²

National Security Professional Development

Finally, this chapter returns to the NSPD initiative introduced earlier in the literature review. While other workforce programs address functional interagency needs, NSPD suggests a broader method to address *all* national security issues. Essentially, NSPD is a framework to inculcate interagency expertise within the government, and to hone a corps of upper-level professionals capable of leading interagency efforts across the national security spectrum. According to one NSPD official, the program's focus on upper-level employees is just the first stage, involving 20,000 people in the national security structure, 1,500 of whom work in the Senior Executive Service (SES).²³ For those aspiring to the SES, and in accordance with the NSPD strategy, departments have begun to emphasize an interagency 'tour' as a prerequisite for promotion.²⁴ Such emphasis is not unique to the NSPD era; as early as the *Hart-Rudman* study, the government has considered interagency experience a desirable quality for its SES employees.²⁵

Despite its role in building an interagency workforce, NSPD is not a schoolhouse like the training program run by S/CRS; in fact, it does not have its own budget, and therefore depends upon the energies of the individual departments to fulfill its mandate.²⁶ Because of this dependent status, and its lack of legislative backing (there is no NSPD equivalent to the Goldwater-Nichols Act), the program faces an uncertain future under the new administration.²⁷

Furthermore, the recently-released PNSR study speaks of incorporating NSPD into the wider reconstruction of the National Security System.²⁸ Although incorporation might be a positive development, since it would blend the human capital program with a much broader effort, it puts near-term NSPD activity in a questionable status as the program waits to learn its fate. Fortunately, NSPD executives participated in the PNSR study, allowing them to articulate their vision and accomplishments to date.²⁹ On the negative side, commentators on the national security process have been raising doubts about the long-term viability of NSPD, especially its efforts to produce a graduate-level education program.³⁰ Whether these doubts represent unfounded negativity or justified realism, they pose a threat to NSPD in this time of uncertainty. If the program falls by the wayside in the government's quest for yet another human capital solution, then the first serious USG *implementation* effort will have been wasted.

Notes

¹ Officer of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization website: CRC mission statement.

² State Department course materials and classroom discussion.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Another estimate comes from Binnendijk and Cronin, "Civilian Surge", chapter 1. Through lengthy analysis, the authors recommended a much higher number for the CRC: 5,000 members in the Active and Standby components, and another 10,000 in the Reserve. Their numbers were based upon steady-state requirements for one large, one medium, and four small contingencies running simultaneously.

⁶ State Department course materials and classroom discussion.

⁷ Personal observation.

⁸ Shepard, "Developing Military Interagency Experts", 25.

⁹ General Accounting Office, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams*, 3.

¹⁰ Ibid., 4; and US Embassy, Baghdad, Iraq, "PRT Fact Sheet."

¹¹ Discussion with Desk Officer, Office for Afghanistan, State Department; and *Forging a New Shield*, 308.

¹² Discussion with Desk Officer, Office for Afghanistan, State Department.

¹³ US Embassy, Baghdad, Iraq, "PRT Fact Sheet."

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ US Joint Forces Command, "JIACG Fact Sheet."

Notes

¹⁶ State Department course material and classroom discussion.

¹⁷ Email correspondence with JIACG team member, US Pacific Command.

¹⁸ Discussion with International Affairs Specialist (IAS) Office, SAF/IA. The ability to pick up interagency skills on-the-job offers an alternative method for developing interagency specialists, in contrast to the formal, graduate-level education path espoused by PNSR et al.

¹⁹ Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Staff Study, 23.

²⁰ Ibid., 3-4.

²¹ Ibid., 4.

²² Discussion with IAS Office, SAF/IA.

²³ Discussion with Deputy Director, NSPD Integration Office. As more leaders become certified National Security Professionals, NSPD will turn toward building interagency capacity among junior employees embarking on interagency careers. From a fiscal perspective, it makes sense to address the human capital problem in linear fashion: first develop the leaders, then the followers. However, a faster method that builds human capital *in parallel* fashion might be preferable. See also website: http://www.nspd.gov/About_NSPD_main/Background.

²⁴ Losey, "Defense Execs Must Have Joint Duty to Move Up."

²⁵ *Road Map for National Security*, 102.

²⁶ Dale, *Building an Interagency Cadre*, 26.

²⁷ Ibid., 10.

²⁸ *Forging a New Shield*, 466.

²⁹ Discussion with Deputy Director, NSPD Integration Office. NSPD has recently presented its case to decision-makers, highlighting parallels between PNSR recommendations and NSPD achievements. The parallels are significant, and argue convincingly for NSPD's continued existence.

³⁰ Mauer, *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 114; and Binnendijk and Cronin, "Civilian Surge", 144.

Chapter 5

Possible Models for Capacity-building

Having investigated several current efforts to meet human capital challenges, this paper will now consider four different models the USG might employ in its future workforce-building efforts: a combined NSPD/PNSR model, a CRC model, a single-track FAO model, and a dual-track FAO model. Notably absent is a PRT/JIACG model. The reason for this omission is that the PRT/JIACG experience is about human capital *employment*, not human capital generation.¹ Furthermore, the PRT/JIACG genesis was an ad hoc learning process aimed at functional issues, making it a poor model for broad, interagency efforts. If anything, the USG should strive to move away from such ad hoc solutions. Instead, the government should develop interagency workers ahead of time: people who can populate interagency teams when required.² With these thoughts in mind, this chapter will now compare and contrast the four models by considering each in the context of the three overarching topics introduced earlier: timeline, structure, and people.

Combined NSPD/PNSR Model

This first model assumes a reinvigorated NSPD program that produces an interagency corps within the centralized structure proposed by PNSR; in other words, PNSR absorbs NSPD. The model assumes NSPD cannot produce sufficient human capital in its current, decentralized state

exactly because program implementation is left to the discretion of the departments. This laissez-faire approach was manifest in a recent Office of Personnel Management (OPM) memorandum to the agencies, in which departments were reminded to identify key SES positions requiring interagency experience, and to develop a pool of individuals to fill those jobs. The memo made no reference to a timeline, and left most developmental details up to the individual agencies.³ In sharp contrast, PNSR argued that departments are poorly equipped to develop their workforces for a host of reasons, which points to the need for centralization.⁴ Under a combined NSPD/PNSR model, a central organization would manage workforce development for all the departments.

Even with centralized control, the timeline remains undefined, illustrating that nobody really knows how long an ambitious human capital project will take. The management-level population might not need a significant training/education program since they presumably enjoy some understanding of what ‘interagency’ entails. However, if the model follows the PNSR literature, then aspiring leaders *must* fulfill an interagency tour of “significant duration” prior to applying for critical SES positions.⁵ Such tours will take considerable time when summed across all the departments. In addition, NSPD/PNSR creates its interagency corps from workers at all career levels, and recommends similar rotational tours for them as well. The resulting professionals will be very close to the ‘ideal’ posited in chapter three, but all of this development activity adds up to a long-term effort that might take a decade or more to realize.

On the subject of structure, the combined NSPD/PNSR model represents the ‘horizontal stovepipe’, with particular advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, the centralized structure provides a secure and understandable environment in which the interagency corps works, with its own system of incentives, promotions, and assignments.⁶ On the negative side

lies the cost and time of creating such a bureaucratic structure from the ground up, since nothing like it exists today. The PNSR report acknowledges the need for more people by invoking the personnel ‘float’ concept, which would enable the necessary training and rotational assignments once the system is operational. However, first achieving that operational level will require more than just a float; it will mean hiring a lot of new people.

Another significant aspect of the NSPD/PNSR structure involves education, specifically new educational institutions and a career-spanning program to develop the interagency corps. This emphasis on long-term education derives from all the previous major studies on building interagency capacity. As a future goal, an educational structure has merit; for example, many would point to DoD’s culture of ‘professional military education’ as a positive example. Unfortunately, it also adds to the cumbersome work entailed in building the bureaucratic structure. Clearly, the USG will need to overcome considerable inertia to enable the NSPD/PNSR model.

The personnel angle of the NSPD/PNSR model reveals its greatest attraction. First, individuals would enter a long-term government career on equal footing with their peers in traditional departments, supplying both incentive to join and incentive to stay. They also would have the leeway to move in and out of the corps, allowing them to maintain credibility within their original career fields, per the definition of the ‘ideal interagency expert.’ Second, the departments benefit because a standing interagency corps obviates their need to release people for interagency tasks, reducing the manning turmoil they face today. Third, the combined NSPD/PNSR model fixes a candidate problem within the current program. Under today’s NSPD program, military, intelligence community, and Foreign Service personnel are excluded because those departments allegedly develop their own interagency capacity.⁷ While this is true to a

certain extent, these independent programs need to be integrated with the broader capacity-building enterprise. The PNSR report wisely makes no such exclusion to membership, and thus the combined NSPD/PNSR model opens the candidate pool to everyone.

CRC Model

The proposed CRC model takes the current State Department initiative and applies it to all large-scale interagency concerns. In this model, think of the CRC as a Response Corps (RC), since an RC might include military personnel as well. To begin, the government manages the system centrally, and defines areas of interagency concern. For instance, the USG should develop an RC to deal with domestic disasters, a solution for the post-hurricane Katrina experience. In addition, the government might create an RC to address homeland anti-terrorism efforts. Each additional corps would vary in size according to its functional responsibilities, and each would report to its own lead agency, just as the current CRC reports to DoS.

The timeline to create the CRC model is measurable. Three years elapsed from the creation of S/CRS to the birth of the CRC, so history suggests a similar timeline for other RCs. Even better, since the blueprint already exists, future corps should generate even more quickly. This short timeline is one of the strongest arguments for the CRC model, and enables some of its structural characteristics.

Structurally, the CRC model is fairly simple and has the added benefit of being scalable. As the government determines new interagency needs, it can build RCs as required. Furthermore, as needs shrink, so too can specific RCs. Another benefit, discussed in chapter three, is the model's 'overlay' structure, which diminishes the time, expense, and inertia of creating a completely new bureaucracy. As with all of the models, the CRC structure results in a

net increase in government employees, either to populate the RCs with civilian sector specialists, or to temporarily backfill department employees who join the active components of the RCs. In any case, payroll expansion is a necessary bill for interagency capacity. Fortunately, the existence of the standby component, people who are not ‘backfilled’ when they deploy, could keep the manpower bill from climbing so high.

From the personnel angle, the CRC model requires a careful look. One of the model’s greatest strengths is its ability to develop an interagency worker rapidly. Rather than requiring a career-long path of interagency education, an RC member undertakes a regimen of interagency training through a ‘schoolhouse’ hosted by the lead agency. Instead of requiring years of preparation, an interagency worker can be ready in months. The model presumes a worker’s competency in his or her field of expertise, so that only a ‘top off’ is sufficient to prepare the individual for interagency work. While this training populates the RCs rather quickly, it does not address the parent agency’s problem of finding and training suitable backfill personnel.

The rotational nature of the CRC workforce is also problematic. While the rotations enable the departments to retrieve their experts after relatively short absences, the system also bleeds its corporate knowledge, especially since an RC member is under no obligation to re-enlist for future tours. As already noted, lack of corporate knowledge has crippled interagency efforts to date, and remains one the foremost obstacles to current interagency efforts. Furthermore, a CRC worker might not actually deploy over his or her two-year window of opportunity. The deployment provides the actual interagency *experience*, and as mentioned in the previous chapter, experience is one of the keys to interagency success. Such is the nature of creating a *standing* deployment capability, an inherent weakness of the CRC model.

Finally, interagency workers might not feel as professionally supported by this model as they would in others. Would their parents departments view their rotations as detractors from career progression, or would CRC tours place individuals in good stead with their peers? Workers wishing to hedge against the risk to career might be inclined to ‘moonlight’ with their parent organization, especially since that organization is still providing office space and overhead support. Unfortunately, this model cannot effectively dictate to the departments because of its decentralized nature and its short-term view regarding its employees.

Single-track FAO Model

A single-track model for the interagency, based upon the system used by the Army and Navy, builds a permanent interagency workforce within each USG agency. For the purpose of this discussion, FAO will mean ‘foreign *agency* officer’, a person whose career centers on working issues outside of his or her parent agency. The FAO model assumes strong, centralized direction to the departments from the executive branch, since departments historically balk at manpower development. Although the single-track model employs centralized control, it practices decentralized execution. Specifically, the FAOs remain part of their departments for all career matters. Consequently, each department would create a separate, internal FAO career track. Once an individual embarks on the FAO track, they would be measured strictly against their fellow FAOs for assignments and promotions. Furthermore, to maintain corporate knowledge and justify training expenses, FAOs would not return to their previous jobs.

From a timeline perspective, the single-track model will be fairly slow to develop across the whole government. As a benchmark, from FY06 to FY07, DoD created 200 new FAOs, a 14% increase in their FAO population.⁸ This one-year rate of production looks promising, but

the Defense Department has two advantages in building capacity. First, their FAO program is already well established. Second, those 200 officers represent just a tiny fraction of the department's overall manpower. Despite these advantages, the military probably requires more training time per FAO than other departments. For instance, the Air Force estimates 2-3 years per candidate, at least partly because of the intrinsic foreign language requirement.⁹ A FAO from the Department of Justice probably would not require such intensive training and education for interagency work. Also, FAO candidates from non-military departments might not require the seven to nine years of experience noted in the military example. In fact, those departments possibly could hire experts directly from the civilian sector to enter their FAO programs. Thus, the non-military departments might struggle initially in setting up their programs. However, once started, they potentially could develop capacity rather rapidly.

Structurally, the single-track model is uncomplicated. The only new bureaucracy required is the central controlling entity, an executive body which sets the ground rules for FAO development and determines interagency tasks requiring FAO expertise. For instance, the controlling body might determine a need for a commerce specialist on a PRT, and would consequently levy that requirement on the Commerce Department. Of course, the departments' payrolls would need to expand commensurate with their interagency responsibilities. While this might be costly, it is not complex.

As with the other models discussed so far, the personnel side of the single-track model poses advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, the system develops long-term interagency workers who are secure in their chosen career path. Furthermore, FAOs know they are going to be employed in their fields of expertise. Different from the CRC model, the FAO model produces just enough experts to cover the known interagency requirements; there is no

manpower overage waiting for a short-notice phone call to deploy. At the same time, this ‘perfect fit’ system will cause internal strains. The training pipeline will find itself constantly expanding and contracting to meet demand, and in times of surge, existing FAOs will become overworked, high-value commodities. This surge problem may have led to the recent ramp-up in DoD FAO production.¹⁰

Another drawback, specific to the single-track model, is that FAOs will slowly lose their original specialist identities. Recall that an ‘ideal interagency expert’ maintains credibility through periodic re-immersion in original skill sets. Single-track FAOs, by contrast, will not cycle back into their earlier missions. Even though they remain members of their departments, their focus shifts permanently to something *different* from the fundamental missions they used to know. This evolutionary problem is something that the dual-track FAO model attempts to address.

Dual-track FAO model

The dual-track model differs from the single-track model in just a few important ways. The first difference lies in the timeline consideration. Dual-track FAOs take as long to develop as their single-track peers, but the model adds an additional corps of specialists who serve in the interagency for just one ‘tour’ before returning to their original mission areas. These people would not need the same level of experience as the FAOs, so their training would be considerably shorter. Also, they would alleviate some of the FAO stress incurred during surge periods, making the system more responsive to real-world perturbations.

From a personnel consideration, the dual-track model is more complicated. Dual-track FAOs lead two separate lives, alternating between FAO duty and original mission. This raises

problems with promotions and assignments, since FAOs will be measured against all their peers in the department, including the non-FAOs. For the model to work, departments will need to pay particular attention to this delicate issue, or risk serious morale problems within their ranks. Another difference lies in the number of FAOs required per department. Since dual-track FAOs rotate in and out of interagency jobs, a department needs twice as many people trained in order to cover a given set of FAO billets. This excess is an addition to the training ‘float’ required to replace personnel attrition.

Why create this more complicated dual-track personnel system? The obvious reason is to build a FAO community that stays intimately familiar with core missions, while at the same time developing interagency expertise. The real challenge of making this model work falls upon the individual. Candidates must be highly qualified, and need to understand their unique challenges up front. Each needs to be a master of two different trades.

Notes

¹ One might argue that PRTs and JIACGs do develop limited human capital through OJT training.

² Carafano, “Managing Mayhem”, 137.

³ Hager, memorandum.

⁴ Forging a New Shield, 321.

⁵ Ibid., 469.

⁶ For a complete description of the PNSR human capital model, including training, education, and program oversight, see *Forging a New Shield*, 466-472.

⁷ Dale, *Building an Interagency Cadre*, 11-12.

⁸ Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Staff Study, cover letter.

⁹ Annual Report on the Air Force Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Program, 4.

¹⁰ Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Staff Study, cover letter.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

Developing human capital for interagency work remains a critical concern for the United States. To illuminate the human capital problem, this paper traced USG development efforts over the past twelve years, highlighting a series of studies that culminated in the recent work by the Project on National Security Reform. Although considerable effort went into all of these studies, there has been a discouraging lack of resulting progress by the government. To better explain this observation, the paper investigated the complexity of the human capital problem in terms of three overarching topics: timeline, structure, and people.

Timeline is a critical consideration, since the government must act quickly to fix its human capital shortage. However, short-term remedies might not provide the right sort of interagency experts needed, so long-term action is also necessary. In addition, the government must choose a bureaucratic structure to support its interagency workforce. Possible structures include a new centralized organization, or in contrast, a decentralized model that relies upon existing departments and agencies. In any case, the structure should provide the sort of career development opportunities and incentives necessary to attract and retain the best employees. This idea led to a discussion of the types of people available for interagency work. Current government employees, private individuals, government contractors, and military members are

all potential interagency employees. Each type comes with particular strengths and weaknesses that must be considered in building an interagency workforce.

After defining the complex human capital problem, the paper studied several on-going efforts to build interagency capacity. Notably, the State and Defense Departments have made some progress in developing human capital, as has the presidentially directed National Security Professional Development program. Based upon these efforts, the paper introduced four plausible models to develop human capital. Although each model has merit, no single one would adequately solve the complex problem alone. Therefore, this paper concludes that the government needs a grand strategy that ties several models together.

The recommendation is for a strategy with two parts, one for the short term (probably less than ten years) and one for the long. Both parts should be initiated as soon as possible, in order to provide continuity when they intersect at some point in the future. The short-term part recognizes that today's human capital initiatives show promise. For instance, people currently see value in joining the Civilian Response Corps, and to interfere with such progress would certainly be counterproductive. Consequently, the government should nurture such initiatives, and protect them from new, well-intentioned ideas that might tend to smother current gains. The government should implement this short-term goal using a composite of the last three models analyzed in the previous chapter.

The composite structure would include three layers of capability, similar to the IMS initiative, but striving to *produce* interagency capacity, rather than simply to *employ* it. The top layer, composed of decision-makers, would provide the centralized guidance recommended in both the CRC and FAO models. The people for this job already exist in government; they are

the early graduates from the NSPD program, and senior officials who have interagency experience. This top layer would require a modest bureaucratic investment in time and money.

The middle layer would supply the corporate knowledge of the system, and would probably take the longest to populate. These people would be full-time interagency specialists drawn from the multi-agency FAO model. Whether single- or dual-track, they would provide the capacity for training, planning, and executing steady-state interagency efforts, both domestically and abroad. As with the FAOs in the Defense Department, their numbers should be carefully tailored to match the actual jobs they fill, in addition to an obligatory ‘float’ for training and rotations.

The bottom layer would be composed of RCs. These are the people who would supply the interagency surge capacity so sorely lacking to date. When deployed, they would file into structures already designed for them, such as PRTs. RC members would not necessarily be *subordinate* to the FAOs; rather, they would supplement FAO capacity, much like the IPCs supplement the JFC planning staffs, and the ACTs supplement the Country Teams. The good news is that one RC is already coming together under DoS, and as one interagency observer noted, the Army Reserve could serve as an RC all by itself.¹

This blended model would not be inexpensive, but it has two short-term advantages. First, it would rely primarily on bureaucratic structures already in existence (the ‘overlay’ structure), thereby eliminating some of the inertia that has plagued the government. Second, it would incorporate elements of interagency capacity that already exist, such as the Civilian Response Corps and the Defense Department FAOs. If the government could draw together the three layers, it would enhance its interagency capacity in the near future, preparing the soil for the longer-term part of the grand strategy.

This second part recognizes that a strong corps of interagency experts would benefit from careful career planning and considerable investment over time. To implement this second part of the strategy, the government should adopt the NSPD/PNSR model. This model is the descendant of ten years of deep thinking, and as such it outlines the key tenets of producing a competent, durable, and sufficiently robust corps of professionals. The vision may not be attainable even ten years from now, but it will serve as a target for success. The USG should adopt it, implement it, and stop tinkering with it.

Arguably, the kinds of skills inherent in an interagency expert are the same as those required of an expert who works in the international realm. Just as interagency friction has been the focus of much attention, so too has the friction between the United States and other nations trying to work toward a common goal.² In a recent address at the United States Institute of Peace, Defense Secretary Robert Gates referred to the ongoing international efforts in Afghanistan:

To be successful, the entirety of the NATO alliance, the European Union, NGOs, and other groups – the full panoply of military and civilian elements – must better integrate and coordinate with one another and also with the Afghan government. These efforts today – however well-intentioned and even heroic – add up to less than the sum of the parts.³

Learning how to develop people with interagency skills may well assist the government in developing *international* experts, and advance its broadest efforts to succeed in complex, international endeavors.

Notes

¹ Discussion with Dr. James Jay Carafano, Senior Research Fellow, The Heritage Foundation.

² Murdock et al., *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols*, 62.

³ Sec Def Gates, Dean Acheson Lecture.

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